

Appl. No. 09/767,627
Amdt. dated Feb. 11, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Dec. 2, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are pending. Claims 13 and 16-40 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-12, 14, and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103. Claims 1-12, 14, and 15 remain for consideration upon entry of the present Response. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-6, 9-12, 14 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,410,812 to Althaus (hereinafter "Althaus '812") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,359,774 to Althaus (hereinafter "Althaus '774"). The Examiner alleges that Althaus '812 discloses the invention substantially as claimed (including guard ribs), but that Althaus '812 does not show guard ribs integrally formed with the body. The Examiner further alleges that Althaus '774 teaches the use of guard ribs integrally formed with the body for the purpose of reducing manufacturing cost and that, therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified the guard ribs of Althaus '812 by providing guard ribs integrally formed with the body as taught by Althaus '774 in order to reduce manufacturing cost.

Claim 1 of the present application recites a razor blade cartridge comprising a body including a leading edge, a trailing edge, and a series of guard ribs integrally formed with the body and spaced away from opposing ends of the body extending between the leading and trailing edges thereof; and one or more cutting blades coupled to the body and having portions encompassed by the guard ribs. Each of the cutting blades includes a cutting edge. One or more of the guard ribs covers at least a portion of the cutting edge of at least one of the cutting blades.

Althaus '812 is directed to a razor head in the form of a razor blade unit for a wet-shave razor or a safety razor, the razor blade unit being securable to a front end of a handle. The razor blade unit comprises a plastic body in which two razor blades are disposed, the cutting edges of which extend parallel to one another and are offset one behind the other. The plastic body comprises a base member on which the razor blades are mounted. Projections extend from a forward surface of the base member. Strands of wire are wound around the projections so as to extend over the cutting edges of the razor blades. The strands of wire are critical to achieving a comfortable and safe shave as well as a close and effective shave.

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Althaus '774 is also directed to a razor head in the form of a razor blade unit for a wet-shave razor or a safety razor, the razor blade unit being securable to a front end of a handle. The razor head comprises a plastic body, which comprises a base member on which the razor blades are mounted. A spacer is sandwiched between the razor blades. A top cover is placed on the base member, and a front guard bar extends from a forward surface of the base member parallel to the razor blades. The front guard bar and the top cover are both provided with projecting comb-like projections that extend perpendicular to the razor blades and are aligned with each other. The spacer is provided with similar comb-like projections. All of the comb-like projections on the guard bar, the cover, and the spacer have a rounded tip at the end of projection.

Althaus '812 fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a razor blade cartridge having guard ribs integrally formed with the body, as recited in claim 1 and as admitted by the Examiner.

Althaus '774 also fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a razor blade cartridge having guard ribs integrally formed with the body wherein one or more of the guard ribs covers at least a portion of the cutting edge of at least one of the cutting blades, as recited in claim 1. Althaus '774 explicitly teaches that the comb-like projections of the spacer extend toward the cutting edges of the razor blades and that the comb-like projections of the guard bar and top cover extend perpendicular to the blades; however, while the projections all extend toward the cutting edges of the razor blades, they terminate short of the cutting edges. Accordingly, none of the guard ribs cover any portion of the cutting edge of at least one of the cutting blades, as in the present invention.

Because Althaus '812 fails to disclose, teach, or suggest any semblance of a guard rib, any combination of Althaus '812 with Althaus '774 necessarily fails to teach a razor blade cartridge having guard ribs integrally formed with the body wherein one or more of the guard ribs covers at least a portion of the cutting edge of at least one of the cutting blades, as recited in claim 1.

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness for a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. Because neither Althaus '812 nor Althaus '774 discloses, teaches, or suggests what Applicants recite in claim 1, viz., a razor blade cartridge having guard ribs integrally formed with the body wherein one or more of the guard ribs covers at least a portion of the cutting edge of at least one of the cutting blades, both Althaus '812 and Althaus '774 fail to teach all of the claim

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limitations of Applicants' invention. Furthermore because neither Althaus '812 nor Althaus '774 discloses, teaches, or suggests what Applicants recite in claim 1, any combination of Althaus '812 and Althaus '774 necessarily fails to disclose, teach, or suggest what Applicants recite in claim 1. Consequently, because not all of the claim recitations are taught by the cited references individually or in combination, Applicants' claim 1 is necessarily non-obvious, and Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1.

Claims that depend from a claim that is non-obvious are themselves necessarily non-obvious. Because claims 2-6, 9-12, 14, and 15 depend from claim 1, and because claim 1 is asserted to be non-obvious for the reasons presented above, claims 2-12, 14, and 15 are necessarily non-obvious. Applicants, therefore, respectfully submit that claims 2-12, 14, and 15 are allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 2-12, 14, and 15 be withdrawn.

Claims 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Althaus '812 in view of Althaus '774 as applied to claims 1 and 6 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,167,625 to King et al. (hereinafter "King").

As stated above, claims that depend from a claim that is non-obvious are themselves necessarily non-obvious. Because claims 7 and 8 depend from claim 1, and because claim 1 is asserted to be non-obvious for the reasons presented above, claims 7 and 8 are necessarily non-obvious. Applicants, therefore, respectfully submit that claims 7 and 8 are allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 7 and 8 be withdrawn.

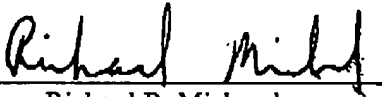
Applicants believe that the foregoing is fully responsive to the Office Action and that the claims herein are allowable. In view of the foregoing points that distinguish Applicants' invention from those of the prior art and render Applicants' invention non-obvious, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the present application, remove the rejections, and allow the application to issue.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

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Applicants believe that no fees are due with the submission of this Response. If any charges are incurred with respect to this Response, they may be charged to Deposit Account No. 503342 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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